(b) The Research &Development Centre of Indian Oil has undertaken research work by blending Hydrogen with CNG on select vehicles. For this purpose, a Hydrogen-CNG mixing unit and dispensing station for the mixture has been commissioned at Faridabad. Presently, a few vehicles are being tested with upto 10% hydrogen in CNG. Further, R&D work has been planned jointly with vehicle manufacturers for carrying out necessary modifications in the engine for achieving the benefits in terms of NOx reduction.

(c) A Hydrogen- and Hydrogen-CNG dispensing station for fueling the IOC R&D test vehicles has already been commissioned at R&D Centre of Indian Oil Corporation in Faridabad. This is the first station of the country which is already in operation.Another Hydrogen and Hydrogen-CNG Mixture dispensing station (at an existing retail outlet of IOC near Lodhi Road, New Delhi) is planned to be set up by Indian Oil Corporation as a part of demonstration project which is partly funded by Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (50%) (MNRE) and partly from Hydrogen Corpus Fund (50%) created by Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. The implementation work for setting up this station is likely to commence during the current financial year and the station is expected to be set up by March, 2008. This station will be used for fueling the demonstration vehicles under various research projects of IOC as well as other agencies funded by MNRE. No decision has yet been taken with regard to commercial supply of such fuel and this decision will depend on the outcome of the research/demonstration projects. The cost of Hydrogen-CNG blend would also depend on the cost of Hydrogen production, cost of CNG and the ratio in which hydrogen and CNG are blended.

Re-opening of HPCL Depot in Kerala

2974. SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) opened a depot at Ponmana, Kollam, Kerala during the year 1994;

(b) if so, whether above depot had been closed during the year 1999;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether steps will be taken to re-opening the depot in the light of dredging and widening of water canal for barrage transportation;

(e) if so, whether during August, 2006 the competent authority of Kerala has represented for re-opening the depot; and

(f) if so, the action taken in details and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) set up a depot at Quilon during 1994 as the first waterfed depot which was fed from the Ernakulam Terminal. The depot was located approximately 20 Kilometres away from Quilon town, on land acquired through District Administration. Despite monetary compensation paid to land owners as per the Government rate fixed by the District Collector, the Project Affected Persons (PAP) kept on agitating and demanding employment in the Corporation. Further, on the account of the uneconomic barge transportation due to lack of dredging and widening of the water channel and due to the blocking of the approach to the barge jetty by dumping of rubbles in the reclamation areas, the barge loading could not be operated. On account of the repeated threats to the regular employees of the Corporation, the depot operations were temporarily suspended for safety reasons. Presently, no activities are being carried out at Quilon depot. Prior to the closure of operations, the Quilon depot was fed from the Terminal at Ernakulam. With the commissioning of the Terminal at Irumpanam and simultaneous closure of the Ernakulam Terminal in March, 2005 the supply source for Quilon market has now shifted to Irumpanam Terminal. Moreover at Irumpanam, due to reduced draft and spread of fishing nets, barge loading is not possible. Also there is no facility available for loading of barges at Irumpanam. In addition to this, Petrol cannot be moved as no fit barges are available with approval for channel for transporting Class A Petroleum Products. HPCL has reported that the revival of the Quilon Depot is not an economically viable option.

(e) and (f) In September, 2006 a request for restarting the storage plants at Ponmana in Kollam Districts, Kerala was received from Minister of Water Resources, Government of Kerala, wso has been informed of the latest status in the matter.